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Letter dated 9 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

Attached herewith is the national report of the Russian Federation on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for the annual ministerial review to be held during the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2012 of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 9 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

[Original: Russian]

National voluntary submission from the Russian Federation for the 2012 annual ministerial review in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on the theme "Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals"

Summary

The Russian Federation is one of the world's economic leaders, and its economic development is aimed at raising its citizens' quality of life, guaranteeing employment and decent work and boosting social assistance. Social expenditures currently account for more than half of all national budget outlays. Over the past four years, social expenditures have increased in absolute terms by a factor of 1.5, and risen from 21 to 27 per cent of the gross national product.

The Russian economy steadily increased its growth rate from 2001 to 2008, leading to a significant drop in unemployment (from 7.1 million in 2000 to 5.6 million in 2008) and to increased income. Real wages (taking into account consumer price increases) rose by a factor of 2.2 during this period. The number of people living below the poverty line dropped from 29 to 13.3 per cent of the total population.

Midway through the last decade, the Russian economy was faced with long-term systemic challenges that were a reflection both of world trends and of domestic barriers to development. Most important among these were intensified global competition, a new wave of technological innovations, the depletion of exportable raw materials, and the heightened impact of human capital on economic growth rates.

The international financial and economic crisis that began in the autumn of 2008 had a significant effect on core national economic development indicators. This immediately affected the situation in the social sector. Some socioeconomic indicators deteriorated, mainly those related to growth in unemployment and underemployment, increased unpaid back wages and lower real wage growth rates in the leading economic sectors.

Despite the crisis, the Government of the Russian Federation has moved ahead with full implementation of measures to preserve social stability and stave off a spike in unemployment and a drop in living standards. Financial reserves accumulated prior to the crisis have been tapped in order to meet the State's social commitments to its people and achieve its goals.

Measures to limit the rise in unemployment and hold income steady are central to the Russian Government's programme to counter the crisis. No other country has carried out such activities on this scale.

The State has set aside substantial resources for assistance to enterprises battered by the crisis and to save jobs at those enterprises. Paid community work to improve public amenities in populated areas has been scaled up dramatically. Special retraining, requalification and small business job creation measures have been adopted for employees of failed enterprises.

In 2010, unemployment dropped by 11 per cent from 2009 levels, and real income increased by 5.1 per cent. The labour market was fully restored to pre-crisis levels in 2011, and real income increased by another 0.8 per cent.

The Russian Federation must now find ways of updating its economy, closing the technology gap, innovating, increasing labour productivity and worker qualifications, adopting and implementing additional measures to improve living standards, and improving social well-being.

Economic renewal involves structural changes in employment; maximum use of all available labour resources in a time of demographic flux, including, most importantly, the greying of the population; liberalization of labour relations; and improvement of labour conditions and organization.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to building cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO). An international high-level conference on decent work is set for December 2012 in Moscow. It should serve as a powerful impetus for coordinating multilateral efforts to achieve the goals of inclusive, sustainable and just economic growth for all.

I. Introduction

1. The Russian Federation's socioeconomic development priorities are set out in the country's framework for long-term socioeconomic development for the period up to 2020 and in the document setting out the primary areas of activity of the Government of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2012.

2. During the financial and economic crisis, the Russian Government adopted a programme of crisis-response measures for 2009 and 2010. The programme's primary components were designed to maintain social stability and assure full social protection, including curbing unemployment growth, designing worker retraining programmes and providing targeted job placement support.

3. Implementation of priority national projects in health care, education, housing and the agricultural production sector adopted in 2006 has continued. Every national project is at core designed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, specially adapted to the Russian Federation in 2005 as part of a United Nations Development Programme project.

4. All the tasks outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration are being rigorously implemented in the Russian Federation. These include ensuring decent work and productive employment for all, including young people and women, eradication of extreme poverty and the reduction of poverty, inequality and social marginalization.

5. The Russian Federation has a high United Nations Human Development Index rating. Extreme poverty is not widespread and is found only among people who lead socially objectionable modes of life. The 2010 Russian National Census recorded 34,000 homeless households, representing 64,000 individuals, or a mere 0.04 per cent of the country's population. The number of homeless has been halved since 2002.

6. The coordinating mechanisms linking society, business and the State in the Russian Federation are reasonably effective and are designed to ensure that the interests of businesses and various groups in society are factored into the development and implementation of socioeconomic policy.

7. The primary role in aligning the interests of the State, employers and labour unions in the regulation of labour matters and avoidance of social and labour conflicts falls to a social partnership which will mark its twentieth year in 2012. The major social partnership institutions came into existence during this period, and a legal framework enabling dialogue was established, to achieve an optimum balance among the interests of workers, employers and society as a whole.

8. The Russian Tripartite Commission for the Regulation of Social and Labour Relations is the primary forum for discussing the most pressing social and labour issues, including promotion of the labour market, job creation, improved remuneration and pension systems, compulsory and voluntary social insurance, labour rights protection and worker safety. The Commission's activity has resulted in a general agreement between national trade union associations, national employers' associations and the Russian Government, one of whose key aims is to maintain steady economic development, social stability and social protection.

II. Russian Federation employment policy priorities in a time of international financial and economic crisis

9. The national employment policy is set forth in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which enshrines the right of each person to freedom from unemployment and to compensation for their labour, with no discrimination of any kind.

10. The legal, economic and organizational underpinnings of national employment policy, including State guarantees of citizens' constitutional right to work and social protection from unemployment, are set forth in the Labour Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Employment Act and other regulatory instruments.

11. The Russian Government adopted special programmes to counter the financial and economic crisis in the labour market that were implemented in 2009 and 2010.

12. Measures to maintain income and employment have included:

- Doubling the minimum wage in January 2009;
- Raising the ceiling for unemployment benefits by 50 per cent;
- Increasing wages to workers in the health-care, education, cultural and other State-funded sectors by 30 per cent;
- Multiple pension increases and revaluations, as well as social premiums for retirees living below the poverty line;
- Index-linking of various types of social assistance to stay ahead of inflation, particularly for families and children.

13. In addition to ongoing job creation measures, a number of steps have been taken to ease strain on the labour market.

14. Special steps have been taken to preserve certain low-efficiency jobs and organize large-scale paid community service and temporary work for the unemployed and for those at risk of job loss. Special measures have been taken in regions dominated by a single employer or industry and at enterprises considered strategic or too big to fail.

15. More than 187.1 billion roubles from the federal budget went to State job creation services from 2009 to 2011. More than 37.4 million people benefited from State job creation measures over that period.

16. Between 2009 and 2011, more than 87.1 billion roubles from the national budget went to implementation of State programmes that contained additional measures to reduce labour market pressure in subjects of the Russian Federation. Over 5.2 million people participated in these programmes. There were 4.3 million permanent and temporary jobs created, including some 587,000 permanent jobs in the small business sector.

17. There were regional programmes to increase the competitiveness and labour mobility of workers at risk of job loss, the unemployed and jobseekers.

18. Major efforts were aimed at organizing paid community service jobs and creating temporary jobs, including at concerns experiencing economic difficulties. Cutting-edge job training and self-employment promotion programmes, as well as

employment-based relocation programmes, were organized for workers at risk of job loss, those officially registered as unemployed and jobseekers.

19. Over the period 2009-2011, 2,824,300 people (more than 17 per cent of the total number of unemployed) did paid community service, including 474,400 people in 2011 (10.7 per cent of the total number of unemployed).

20. Over that period, 273,900 unemployed people who were having difficulty obtaining jobs worked in temporary positions, including, in 2011, 85,400 unemployed people (1.9 per cent of the total number of unemployed).

2.1 Vocational training and entrepreneurship support programmes

21. Cutting-edge vocational training programmes for workers, including those employed at concerns undergoing production upgrades, have had a large impact. These programmes have been carried out in close cooperation with employers and labour unions.

22. A total of more than 469,000 people participated in these programmes over the period 2009-2011. This figure includes 41,500 workers at risk of job loss (including down time, reduction in work hours and temporary layoffs), and 74,000 industrial workers engaged in overhauling and upgrading production as part of investment projects.

23. Small business start-up programmes were actively implemented for the unemployed, including for the former employers among them. An unemployed person setting up a business received a lump sum of 58,800 roubles. An employer hiring an unemployed person for a newly created job received the same payment. These funds were used to pay wages, procure equipment and licences and pay rent. The areas where these programmes were most widely put into effect include: rural and agricultural enterprises; passenger transport and haulage; organization of leisure activities; consumer services; wholesale and retail trade, and others.

24. Over the 2009-2011 period, 478,200 unemployed people opened their own businesses with support from Government employment services, thereby creating an additional 128,900 jobs. These figures include 151,600 people who opened their own businesses in 2011, creating an additional 40,400 jobs.

25. Government employment services have provided assistance to unemployed people and their family members in moving to new areas for reasons of employment. The programme in question covers moving expenses to a new place of employment for unemployed people and their families and their resettlement costs.

26. A total of more than 31,600 people participated in this programme over the period from 2009 to 2011, including 11,600 people who sought assistance from Government employment services in their job search and received special assistance in 2011.

2.2 Assistance programmes for vulnerable groups, including women, young people and persons with disabilities

27. Special measures have been organized for specific categories of people encountering difficulties on the job market.

28. These categories include: women, who account for 56.5 per cent of those officially registered as unemployed; young people (in the 16-29 age range), who account for some 28.5 per cent, including vocational college graduates, who account for over 2 per cent; parents with large families and parents raising children with disabilities, some 25 per cent; and persons with disabilities, some 10 per cent.

29. In 2011, a vocational training programme was begun for women taking maternity leave to care for children 3 years of age or younger. This programme is designed to increase women's competitiveness on the labour market and the vocational adjustment of women returning to work upon completion of maternity leave. This type of programme also reduces employer expenditures on further training for such women.

30. Some 1,456,600 women with children aged 1½ years and younger are not working at the present time, of whom some 548,100 are unemployed (by ILO criteria). Under the legislation currently in effect, officially registered unemployed people are entitled to vocational training by referral from the Government employment services. This, in turn, places at a disadvantage women taking maternity leave to care for children aged 3 or younger, as they do not have this entitlement.

31. In 2011, 26,200 women taking maternity leave to care for children aged 3 or younger and planning to return to work were referred for vocational training, retraining and further training. Of these, 15,700 women entered into employment.

32. The shift to innovative technologies has resulted in the elimination of jobs involving harmful and hazardous working conditions, making it necessary to remove substantial numbers of workers, women in particular, from such workplaces. Vocational training has been organized for this category of workers in order to place them in new types of productive activity. In 2011, 3,100 women from this category underwent cutting-edge vocational training and internships. Of those who completed the training, more than 2,900 women found jobs that were free of harmful and hazardous conditions.

33. There is a particular focus on providing employment for young people, especially through job placement support. According to data from the Federal Statistics Service (Rosstat), young people aged 15-29 account for 26-27 per cent of the economically active population in the Russian Federation. On average, young people account for 40 per cent of the unemployed, as calculated according to ILO methodology.

34. Government employment services engage in occupational profiling of young people based on their choice of profession or type of work and vocational education obtained, depending on labour market requirements.

35. Government employment services also organize temporary after-school job placements for minors between the ages of 14 and 18. This activity not only

provides material support but also encourages teenagers to become familiar with work and develop job skills.

36. In 2011, 850,000 minors between the ages of 14 and 18, or more than 92 per cent of those who requested help finding after-school employment, received temporary job placements.

37. Most of those who participated in this activity (some 96 per cent) were enrolled in general educational establishments. Some 2.1 per cent of participants were orphans or children without parental care.

38. Temporary job placement is provided for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are officially unemployed, as part of the general temporary job placement programme for unemployed people encountering difficulties in finding jobs. Thus, in 2011, temporary job placement was organized for 4,700 unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 18, or 31 per cent of the total number of people in this age group registered as unemployed.

39. Job placement for graduates of vocational training institutions remains a pressing problem. Each year some 10 per cent of graduates of professional training institutions are at risk of not finding a job. During the 2009-2010 crisis this figure reached 15 per cent of the total number of young people completing all levels of education.

40. The most common obstacles to finding a job are a lack of vacancies (52.2 per cent), the job seeker's inexperience (insufficient length of service) (47.8 per cent), inadequate pay (30.4 per cent) and a lack of vacancies in the job seeker's field (17.4 per cent).

41. In 2009 and 2010, 52 per cent of all young people completing school or college found work in their chosen speciality.

42. An internship programme for vocational college graduates was organized in 2009 so that they could acquire practical skills and master new technologies and working methods in-house. The primary purposes of the internships is to provide graduates with practical work experience in their chosen occupation (field) and mastery of new technologies and working methods in-house. At the same time the internships help employers recruit needed workers.

43. Under this programme, employers are reimbursed for wages paid to young professionals and for premiums paid to senior employees who mentor graduates. Pairing young professionals with mentors from the ranks of the most respected and qualified employees at a concern not only helps young people adapt to their new occupation and absorb essential new knowledge and professional skills but also helps them become a part of the team and acquire a deeper understanding of what occurs in the workplace.

44. More than 70 per cent of former interns graduating from vocational colleges find steady employment, either in the organization where they did their internship or in other organizations.

45. There were more than 248,800 participants in this programme in 2009 and 2010. This figure includes 54,100 graduates of professional training institutions at all levels who did internships in 2011 to acquire work experience, assisted by 29,300 mentors.

46. In 2012, this programme is to be implemented in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation experiencing high stress in their labour markets. There are plans for 5,500 graduates of vocational training institutions of all levels to participate.

47. Since 2010, a job creation programme has been in place for non-working persons with disabilities, parents raising children with disabilities and parents with large families.

48. Under this programme, employers are reimbursed from the federal and regional budgets for expenditures to equip work stations for persons with disabilities. The vocational and individual rehabilitation programmes of persons with disabilities are taken into account in the design and equipment of their special work stations.

49. In creating jobs for parents of children with disabilities and parents with large families, due account is taken of their individual needs, including telecommuting and working remotely.

50. The implementation of job creation programmes for socially vulnerable groups is just one example of public-private partnership, and it is strongly focused on encouraging the business sector to take a socially responsible approach to the least protected categories of citizens. In 2010 and 2011, 27,300 people received job placement assistance: 18,400 persons with disabilities, 1,700 parents raising children with disabilities and 7,100 parents of large families. In 2011, 19,600 people received job placement assistance: 10,700 persons with disabilities, 1,700 parents raising children with disabilities and 7,100 parents of large families.

51. In 2012, the plan is for some 14,500 people to participate in this programme, including 7,600 persons with disabilities, 2,000 parents raising children with disabilities and 4,800 parents of large families.

2.3 Outcomes

52. As a result of crisis response measures on the labour market, the total number of unemployed people in December 2011 returned to pre-crisis levels: 4,600,000 people, or 6.1 per cent of the economically active population, while, at its peak, in February 2009, this figure stood at 7,100,000 people, or 9.4 per cent. In January 2012, 1,270,000 people, or 1.7 per cent of the economically active population, were registered as unemployed. At its peak, in February 2010, this figure reached 2.9 million people, or 3.1 per cent.

53. The number of people employed in organizations functioning at reduced capacity dropped from a peak of 1,670,000 people in December 2009 to 193,700 people in January 2012.

54. The number of vacancies reported by employers to Government employment services has increased significantly. In January 2012, this figure stood at 1,160,000 (as against 724,000 in December 2009).

55. The nationwide stress index in the domain of employment (the number of people officially registered as not working per job vacancy) was 1.2, as against a peak figure of 3.2 in December 2009.

56. Monthly nominal wages increased by 11.8 per cent in 2010 compared to 2009, and real wages increased by 4.6 per cent over the same period. In 2011, monthly

nominal wages increased by 13 per cent compared to 2010, and real wages increased by 4.2 per cent over the same period. In 2010, the average pension increased in nominal terms by 44 per cent compared to 2009 and in real terms by 34.8 per cent. In 2011, these increases were 9.7 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively, compared to 2010.

III. Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the International Labour Organization: current status and prospects

57. Membership in ILO, one of the most venerable and prominent of international organizations, enables the Russian Federation to study and apply leading-edge international practices to the settlement of labour disputes, develop social partnerships between the Government, labour unions and employers and use ILO recommendations to improve and regulate the labour market. Participation in ILO activities helps in developing labour legislation standards based on international practice; facilitating the resolution of employment problems; creating jobs; and promoting small business and entrepreneurship.

58. According to assessments by the International Labour Office (the ILO secretariat in Geneva), engagement between the Russian Parliament and ILO has been highly productive, with the Russian legislative branch responding rapidly in practical ways to recommendations made during working meetings with ILO specialists and translating them into appropriate regulations. ILO looks upon Russian parliamentarians' international initiatives with great interest. Specifically, in May 2011, ILO supported a proposal for the International Labour Office to host consultations in May 2012 for members of specialized parliamentary committees of Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation and South Africa — the BRICS countries.

59. The Russian Federation would benefit from tapping ILO legislative expertise and research potential in order to promote implementation of Russian economic reforms. The country's senior leadership has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to preserving social guarantees, as the international financial and economic crisis continues, which is completely in keeping with the spirit of the ILO recommendations. It is in our interest to draw upon ILO capacities and expertise in matters such as developing State employment policy during the crisis; anti-poverty measures; labour migration; updating labour legislation; the social security and pension systems; and the establishment of continuous worker training and retraining programmes.

60. The ratification of ILO Conventions 132, 135, 154 and 187 in 2010 and of Convention 174 in 2011 is crucial to advancing cooperation between the Russian Federation and ILO, to expand our participation in international labour standards. ILO and international labour unions perceive this as truly indicative of the Russian Government's commitment to building a welfare State.

61. Preparations for the ratification of the new ILO conventions are ongoing under the general agreement between national trade union associations, national employers' associations and the Russian Government for the period 2011-2013. ILO Convention 173 (protection of workers' claims in the event of the insolvency of

their employer) and the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention were submitted to the State Duma for ratification in April 2012. ILO Conventions 140 and 183 are now in the active phase of inter-agency coordination.

62. In his address at the 100th anniversary session of the International Labour Conference in June 2011, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin endorsed a strategic agenda to expand cooperation between the Russian Federation and ILO. This historic visit (the first by such a high-ranking Russian leader in ILO history) included an overview of the outcomes of the generally productive recent cooperation between our country and ILO, as well as an outline of future steps for implementing ILO programme documents.

63. Prime Minister Putin proposed the hosting of an international high-level conference on decent work in Moscow in December 2012. Work on both the organization and substance of this important event is now being actively pursued.

64. Plans for the conference include discussion of investing in human capital; boosting social protection; setting up effective labour market regulatory mechanisms; laying the groundwork for sustainable wage growth; ensuring respect for fundamental labour rights; and reinforcing social dialogue to promote decent work.

65. Conference participants will exchange views and elaborate coordinated positions on matters related to youth employment, continuing education, well-rounded vocational education and labour market demands.

66. Discussion outcomes will provide impetus to coordinate efforts to achieve the goal of inclusive, sustainable and just economic growth.

IV. What the future may hold

67. By late 2011, the economy had more or less weathered the financial and economic crisis, and sustainable industrial and GNP growth were apparent. Last year, the Russian Federation's GNP increased by 4.2 per cent, the third largest such increase among the world's leading economies, and its industry grew by 4.7 per cent, ranking it in fourth place.

68. That notwithstanding, the structure of the Russian economy, which focuses on the production and sale of raw materials and unfinished goods, is unable to provide guarantees of stability, sovereignty or well-being.

69. The Russian Federation needs a new economic model with a competitive industrial sector, up-to-date infrastructure, an extensive service sector and efficient agricultural production.

70. The economy of the future must be knowledge-based, built upon sophisticated technologies and characterized by high labour productivity and low energy consumption. It must help boost the number of decently paid, highly productive and efficient jobs and encourage small business development and entrepreneurship.

71. Economic restructuring and diversification and a shift to innovative development approaches will lead to changes in the existing employment structure and be accompanied by a reduction in low-efficiency jobs, the redistribution of workers across economic sectors and the emergence of new areas of employment.

72. Based on economic development trends, State labour market development policy will focus on putting in place the legal, economic and institutional conditions underpinning the development of a flexible, efficient labour market able to bridge the structural gap between labour supply and demand, to reduce illegal employment as a share of the labour market and to increase worker motivation and labour mobility.

73. Actions to reduce the disparity between the labour supply and demand are taking on particular urgency. This year, a labour resources balance forecast will be prepared in the Russian Federation, broken down by type of economic activity. The forecast will make it possible to determine the ratio between existing labour resources and projected needs.

74. At the same time, matters related to improving labour quality and competitiveness and to occupational mobility will be addressed through reforms to the vocational education system at all levels and expansion of continuing job-related learning, and specialized vocational training and retraining, based on Government economic development priorities. Planned measures will promote public-private partnerships in labour market services and facilitate the integration of foreign labour into the Russian labour market according to the need for labour resources and the principle of giving priority to domestic labour resources.

75. As the Russian Federation elaborates and implements its domestic strategy for sustainable and just economic growth, higher levels of employment and greater public well-being, the country will retain its focus on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

76. With the Russian economy now steadily emerging from the crisis, more active steps are planned to make labour a reliable route out of poverty and ensure respect for workers' fundamental rights, especially the right to freedom from unemployment and to decent, well-paid and safe work.

77. Unlike the situation in other developed economies, low-wage workers and their families account for a very large proportion of the poor in the Russian Federation, where wage differentials remain high.

78. A gradual increase in the minimum wage has been proposed to rectify this situation, accompanied by strict monitoring to ensure compliance by all employers. There are also plans to establish, through an agreement between employer and labour union associations, reasonable limits for ratios between the salaries of workers in various occupational groups and at various qualification levels, with higher rates of wage increase for workers receiving lower pay.

79. Remuneration will be based on current occupational standards related to job requirements and those of the economy as a whole. These standards will serve as the basis for high-quality educational and vocational training programmes.

80. The workplace safety system in the Russian Federation is now undergoing reform. The primary objective is to devise economic incentives for employers to improve workplace conditions and safety.

81. A new workplace safety system began to take shape in 2011, based on occupational risk assessment and management. There is now a new approach to job performance evaluation, as well as a network of independent assessment bodies.

82. Work is being done to establish a set of labour safety standards and a national information system on working conditions and occupational risks.

83. For the very first time, a programme on health in the workplace has been initiated in Russia, to include a fundamentally new medical and preventive system attending to workers' needs right in the workplace.

84. A list of occupational diseases and health conditions will be compiled that takes into account new technological processes, job descriptions and workplace factors. There will be criteria to determine groups at risk for occupational and workplace-related conditions. Procedures have been established for holding regular medical exams and providing additional preventive treatment. Improvements in medical care for employees are planned, by creating neighbourhood general practitioners' offices, shop-floor infirmaries and on-site clinics at workplaces. Medical and occupational rehabilitation and treatment methods will be designed for those at risk of developing occupational and other job-related conditions.

85. The Russian Federation is continuing its close cooperation with ILO to promote the Global Jobs Pact and the Decent Work Agenda. They are valuable resources for addressing matters of employment, job creation and better-quality jobs, in order to ensure a sustainable economic recovery and future growth, strengthen the social safety net and foster the development of an inclusive and active labour market policy.

86. We will make every effort to ensure the success of the international ILO conference on decent work in Moscow. We strongly believe that this meeting will contribute in a significant way to improved labour relations and optimal cooperation on the labour market among the key partners: the State, employers and labour unions. We urge States, international organizations, specialized scientific and academic societies, business associations and associations of employers and labour unions to participate actively in the conference.